

ONE SHOT MAY TURN MEXICAN SITUATION

Tranquillity of the Capital Likely To Be Broken at Any Moment.

U. S. INTERVENTION CASTS ITS SHADOW

All Believe It To Be Inevitable Unless Huerta Should Be "Eliminated."

By PHILIP H. PATCHIN.
Mexico City, Feb. 25.—To arrive at the "truth about Mexico," to tell what conditions actually are and to discuss with any degree of assurance what the future will be is indeed a difficult task. So much depends on what may happen and there is no way of telling about that. At any moment the battle of a machine gun may break the peace of the city, just as it did about a year ago, whereupon the situation will be entirely changed and the redoubtable Huerta may be "eliminated" in a manner totally unexpected, at least by him.

Again, there is the ever present possibility of intervention by the United States, the coming of the black-clad marine to take charge of the situation. It may be this or it may be that, but which no one knows now. In consequence all discussion must be more or less predicated upon a consideration of possible developments which may or may not occur.

There are, however, phases and facts which stand out perfectly clear. The internal situation in Mexico—the matter of the revolution and the bigger question of making a nation out of the people of this country, a thing far from attained now; the attitude of Huerta and that of his opponents, the welfare of the people and the condition of the downtrodden Indian—is no puzzle. Neither is there anything exterior or concealed about the attitude of the government of the United States, which has such an important bearing on the future, and President Wilson's policy is well understood. So also with the rest of the world.

Huerta Versus Wilson.

Taken apart, these things are all simple enough, but put them together and one has a situation which is complex and pushing in the extreme. Of course, the great question concerns the elimination of President Huerta. The President of the United States insists that he shall be eliminated. Huerta asserts he will not leave his ill-gotten office. Those knowing the tenacity of purpose and persistence of both these executives know that it is a great test of strength. That the President of the United States can accomplish his purpose by force of arms at any time there is no doubt, but thus far he has shown no intention of following that course, pursuing rather a policy of watchful waiting, waiting for Huerta to crumble, and now, more particularly, since the removal of the embargo on arms, waiting for the rebels of the north to drive him out of Mexico City.

Can this be done? Can the rebels win by force of arms? Can Huerta stand the financial strain to which he is being subjected? Can the economic situation longer last without a financial crash in Mexico City which will ruin Huerta? These are the important internal considerations.

More important perhaps than these is the overshadowing question of whether the United States will not be forced to intervene. Will there be more Benjamins killed and will Europe insist on American action and will President Wilson be able to stand the pressure from the other side of the water?

That American intervention in Mexico is a matter of the future no one in Mexico doubts—that is, if the United States intends to insist upon constitutional government and the preservation of peace and order in this neighboring country. Huerta's elimination is not likely to settle the Mexican problem. There is no man in Mexico to take his place with the ability and strength to overcome the habit of revolution which has been so assiduously cultivated since the retirement of Don Porfirio Diaz. Indeed, there is no man in the world.

Fault With the People.

The fault lies not with Mexico's leaders and best men, but with Mexico's people, the ignorant, unfit Indians, led into revolution and brigandage by the self-seeking politicians, the most troublesome of whom are often unholy combinations of Indian, Spanish and possibly African blood. So, even if Huerta goes and another takes his place there is bound to be further revolution and turmoil and bloodshed. The country cannot stand much more of this sort of thing; the powers of the world won't stand for it.

There is ample proof that one revolution breeds another and that elections are almost invariably followed by outbreaks. After Madero took office there were certain elections for Governors in various states. In half a dozen instances the defeated candidate took to the warpath without the slightest delay. It was the custom of the country and it was necessary for him to do so in order to demonstrate his true worth, his bravery and his superiority over the victorious candidate. There is one instance, said to be the only one in Mexican history, where a defeated candidate congratulated his victorious opponent. That man is politically dead in Mexico to-day. The people were completely incapable of understanding his motive and considered his action only a show of weakness.

That America's course of action does not meet with the approval of the Huertistas goes without saying. That it is disapproved by Americans who have made their residence here can be stated with emphatic emphasis. That portion of the American policy which directed Americans to leave Mexico has aroused an intensely bitter feeling among Americans. They feel themselves deserted by their own country. They consider their right to reside here and engage in business as legitimate as their right to the protection of their government, and to be told, as they consider they were told, that if they remained in this country they would do so at their own risk, which becomes a tangible risk through the edict of recall, was a decided strain on their patriotism.

Americans All in Doubt.

There have been, and are, in Mexico, Americans of an undesirable class, trouble makers who arouse anti-Americanism, but there are also men of the highest type of Americanism, mining engineers, merchants and farmers. Some of these have made their life work in Mexico. In this city there are many who have settled down, established what were

flourishing businesses, bought their homes and have their families with them. To abandon their businesses is utterly impossible.

Too old to establish themselves elsewhere they must remain here. Abandonment of Mexico means a ruined life to them and misery for their families. The Americans in Mexico City are better off than many elsewhere, particularly in those regions in the war zone, for here business continues after a fashion, while in other places it is utterly ruined. Also, there is little danger to American life and limb in Mexico City, save for accidents.

One would little think here in Mexico City that the country is torn by strife. Externally everything is as peaceful as a May morn. Business goes on, although stammering; the shops are open, the cafes and restaurants seem to be doing a fair business and the many military bands give constant concerts in the public

squares. The beauties of the city stand out in reassuring aspect. The broad asphalt streets are filled with carriages and automobiles. The people seem rather happy. Yesterday the fiesta of Mari Gras was celebrated with more animation than in recent years. The Avenida San Francisco was packed with motors, carriages and pedestrians. Some of the occupants of the carriages were in mask and costume. Confetti flew and the crowd laughed and jostled.

There is, however, the other and blacker side. On the curb, with baby on back and hand outstretched for alms, is some poor Indian woman, literally keeping house in the gutter. She probably knows no other home than the streets. Then occasionally down the streets come a company of soldiers, formed in a hollow square. Within this square, marching along as prisoners, are a score or more of what are sincerely but humorously called "volun-

taries," poor souls, Indians mostly, barefooted and ragged, some sad of face, others smiling, who have just been impressed into the army.

Women Follow Them.

It is the "leva" or levy, and each night the soldiers sweep out of their barracks, go to the poorer sections of the city, make arrests by the score and thus obtain recruits for the army in the north. It is estimated that within the last fortnight three thousand or more of these men have been picked up on the streets.

Their women follow them, weeping and wailing, possibly with children clinging to their skirts. But there is no hope. Sometimes a man of the better class is caught in the net and he may effect his release, but for the most part there is no escape and off they are shipped, locked in box-cars in all probability, and taken to some distant point to fight the rebels, usually

a point so distant that desertion becomes impracticable.

Except for these recruiting squads, a few brilliantly clad officers and the guards around the public buildings Mexico City shows little military life and is by no means an armed camp, although Huerta takes precautions to defend himself. There is discernible, however, particularly among foreigners, a constant state of irritable apprehension. They who went ten days, a year ago, know what a genuine outbreak in this great city means. They know the horrors and dangers of a great battle in the middle of a large city, how thousands are killed in the streets and how no place is safe when Mexican soldiery turns indiscriminately loose with rifles, machine guns and field pieces. They have seen hundreds die and buildings fall under a heavy fire, and they do not want any more of it.

PARCEL POST TO CUT LIVING COST

Produce Direct from Farm to Consumer Is Postmaster General's New Plan.

Washington, March 22.—Preliminary steps were taken by the Postoffice Department to-day to perfect its plan for reducing the cost of living by having the parcel post carry the products of the farm direct to the door of the consumer. Ten cities were selected to begin the work. Postmaster General Burleson has already issued an order permitting the use of crates and boxes for butter, eggs, poultry,

vegetables and fruit shipped by parcel post.

Orders went to-day to the postmasters at Boston, Atlanta, St. Louis, San Francisco, Baltimore, Detroit, La Crosse, Wis., Lynn, Mass., and Rock Island, Ill., and Washington "to receive the names of persons who are willing to supply farm products in retail quantities by parcel post." Printed lists of these names, showing the kind and quantity of the commodity available, will be distributed among town and city patrons.

"By the use of the lists," said First Assistant Postmaster General Roper to-day, "the city consumer will be able to get in touch with a farmer who will fill his weekly orders for butter and eggs and other farm produce. The consumer will receive the produce fresh from the country and the personal relationship established will no doubt tend to improve the quality. The farmer will be relieved of



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